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INSIDE



House Honoree

Jerry Tan, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's 2003 Business Person of the Year, accepted in a brief ceremony a House resolution crediting him for capturing the prestigious award.

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Narrow Escape

Gunmen opened fire Sunday on a convoy carrying Iraq's minister of public works, killing a driver and a bodyguard and injuring two others, the U.S.-led coalition said. The minister, Nisreen Berwari, was unharmed.

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Buying a Car?

For three months, Philip Reed worked undercover as a car salesman at two Southern California dealerships to find out what really goes on. Now he's giving car buyers advice on what he says he learned.

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CUC junks desalination RFP

Board votes to review viability of project

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Majority of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. Board of Directors voted yesterday to junk the existing Request for Proposal for a 3-million gallon water desalination plant on Saipan.

Four members—Joseph Torres, Velma Ann Palacios, Rufina Miles, and Allen Perez—voted “yes” to the motion to terminate the RFP and to reassess the viability of the whole project.

Voting “no” to the motion were vice chair and operations committee chair Frank Q. Guerrero and board chair Herman P. Sablan.

“I’m very saddened by this but I respect the decision of each member,” said Sablan, clarifying that the board’s decision does not mean rejection of the desalination project.

“We are not saying no to the plan. We can issue another RFP but we have to look at it more closely. That’s the board’s decision,” he said.

He said the board may also decide to hire an independent evaluator for the project.

The “yes” voters have also clarified that they are not opposed to the desalination project per se but following findings of irregularities in its procurement process, they said the project must be reassessed.

During the voting, Guerrero said there is no other alternative to having 24-hour water supply on Saipan other than water desalination.

Sablan said, “I don’t see the reason why you should cancel it,” describing the move as unfair to the project’s proposers.

During the meeting, former governor Froilan Tenorio, who openly advocated for Mitsui USA, the second most responsive proposer based on an earlier selection by a CUC evaluation team, ex-

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LIBERTY DONES

Former Gov. Froilan Tenorio, second left, points out to Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board chair Herman P. Sablan a significant amount of savings if the utility firm chooses Mitsui USA over the other proposers. The board’s majority eventually voted to terminate the entire RFP for a water desalination project on Saipan Monday. Looking on is Public auditor Mike Sablan, right, and OPA’s David Blake, second right.

‘Termination erodes govt credibility’

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Former Gov. Froilan Tenorio warned yesterday that the government’s credibility among private investors would further erode with the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board of director’s decision to cancel an existing project proposal for a water desalination plant.

“We are losing our credibility. If I were a proposer, I would tell you the



next time you ask for proposals, ‘You go to _____,’ said a frustrated Tenorio, who openly cites Mitsui USA’s proposal as the best among four proposers.

Tenorio, who attended yesterday’s CUC board meeting, faulted the board

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Salary hikes at CPA in the works

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is currently looking at the possible implementation of a salary increase at the ports authority after years of austerity measures that prohibited overtimes and salary increments.

For the meantime, the ports authority would disburse an estimated \$43,000 for

the December 2003 bonus, according to CPA executive director Carlos H. Salas.

Salas said the ports authority has identified the number of people who would be receiving the 5-percent bonus but the CPA still has to allocate the funds that are expected to be released by April or May.

“That is one-time bonus. These are the employees who have exhausted their pay level since we stopped giving salary increases for the last several years. These

people should have received the 5-percent bonus in December 2003 but we had to identify first the funding for that. The bonus is expected to be released next month,” said Salas in an interview.

The executive director explained that the 5-percent bonus is equivalent to 5 percent of the salary being received by ports employees. He said the CPA has already identified the amount and is working on

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Lawmaker wants probe on oil price hikes

House Rep. Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero urged the Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications and the Commerce and Tourism committees yesterday to probe anew the latest increase in fuel prices in the Northern Marianas.



Guerrero

Guerrero, the PUTC chairman during the 13th Legislature, expressed alarm over the decision by oil giants Mobil and Shell to raise gas prices by 5 cents per gallon, the second batch of price adjustments this month.

While the minority congressman recognized the worldwide increase of prices, he said the CNMI counted

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Local



Use of Tinian hangar as arrival area approved

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

In preparation for the direct China Southern Air flights to the West Tinian International Airport, the Commonwealth Ports Authority has approved the use of the old Tinian airport hangar as an arrival terminal, as requested by the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

With direct flights expected next month, the CPA approved the request on the condition that the hotel would pay \$10 a month to use the facility until the completion of the new Tinian airport.

The request was approved last March 5 during the CPA Board of Directors' regular meeting.

While reviewing the request, vice-chair Antonio Camacho questioned whether the \$10 fee was reasonable based on the scope of the work that will be done to improve the facility, which he believes may range between \$25,000 to \$30,000.

It was not immediately clear who will foot the expenses to renovate the facility—CPA or

Tinian Dynasty. However, CPA said it will require in the permit that the plans be subject to final approval by the CPA Engineering Department.

Safety issues were also raised due to the hangar's location, but Salas said the approval is conditioned upon meeting the safety issues.

The actual request was to turn the hangar into a new departure area, but in a meeting with Tintian Dynasty's Tom Liu, CPA executive director Carlos H. Salas recommended that the hangar be used only for arrivals because using it for departure will burden the Transportation Security Administration to move the checkpoint to the building, which also requires authorized expenses from the TSA. CPA will also have to make improvements to the hangar facility.

The original request also stated that the hangar would be used for \$10 a month for the next 40 years, but was placed under permit basis by Salas, who stressed that it will expire when the departure building is completed.

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Despite a court order, the Rota Mayor's Office has yet to settle its debt with a company that had provided materials and rendered rehabilitation work after super-typhoon Pongsona devastated the island more than a year ago.

DK Brothers threatened to make Mayor Benjamin Manglona personally liable for the judgment, demanding that the mayor settle his office's obligations by tomorrow.

The firm also pressed Manglona to waive all penalties and interests arising from the unpaid taxes by the company and Rota Merchandising Corp., blaming their financial difficulty on the local government's nonpayment of its debt.

The Superior Court had ordered the mayor's office to pay DK Brothers and Rota Merchandising Corp. a total of \$86,987.34, including the costs associated with the lawsuit. After the court order, the mayor's office only paid DK Brothers \$28,100, according to the firm's Pedro Q. dela Cruz.

"We lost a lot of income op-

portunities due to your failure to pay us on time. It is pathetic that you continue to enjoy the comfort of your office and also the resumption of cable TV service to the island while we suffer financial hardship and loss of income opportunities, as well as the CNMI government is [sic] threatening to levy all of our other income to satisfy the taxes owed," dela Cruz said.

Had the mayor's office paid the company on time, dela Cruz said the firm would not have incurred unpaid taxes.

Dela Cruz also accused Manglona of misrepresenting that his office had asked the CNMI government to pay the company.

He said Manglona earlier assured them that contractors could offset unpaid taxes against outstanding balances owed them by the local government.

in connection with services related to rehabilitation work after Pongsona.

Dela Cruz said Manglona never communicated with DK Brothers despite receiving a copy of the court order.

“Should the government continue to insist that we must pay interest and penalties [for unpaid taxes], my attorney is ready to go back to court to amend the judgment to include all interest and penalties. We will also ask the court to include you to be personally liable as an individual as part of the judgment,” he said.

He added: "We responded quickly to your plea for assistance after the storm and we expect that you do the same."

In the lawsuit, DK Brothers claimed to have renovated the mayor's office, which was destroyed by the supertyphoon, for

\$15,535. It also claimed to have repaired the Rota Health Center in the amount of \$1,200.

The firm also said it provided repair work to the MCV Building for \$18,600, besides some \$40,000-worth of equipment services rendered from Dec. 11, 2002 to Feb. 10, 2003.

Rota Merchandising Corp., meanwhile, said it provided construction materials in the renovation of the mayor's office, costing the company \$3,288.75. The company is also claiming an additional \$3,300 to redeem disaster relief coupons tendered by farmers and fishermen.

The mayor had issued relief coupons to farmers and fishermen to help them recover right after Pongsona destroyed crops and affected their livelihood. The disaster also left the harbor in Song-song Village totally destroyed.

Yumul wants garment firm monitored

Rep. Ray N. Yumul yesterday expressed concern over the fate of NET Corp., a garment company that was recently sanctioned by the Garment Oversight Board for failing to abide by an industry-wide class action settlement agreement.

"If NET Corp. is barred from selling to the U.S. market, its financial status will likely be in jeopardy, so we have to monitor the situation very carefully," said Yumul, adding that the company might eventually be financially insolvent.

Yumul is particularly concerned with the plight of NET Corp.'s garment employees, should the company experience financial difficulties.

“If the company ends up folding, I would be worried about the repatriation of the employees. So

we have to look at the bonding companies and make sure they are sound," said Yumul.

"If NET Corp. cannot even afford to pay \$1,500 per month in restitution pursuant to the settlement agreement, is this an indication that their financial condition is grave?" he asked

Before the Garment Oversight Board decided to decertify NET Corp., the Saipan Garment Manufacturers' Association removed the company from its membership roster.

The board, headed by a panel of judges and attorneys, was formed pursuant to the \$20-million class action lawsuit settlement reached by the local garment industry and suing attorneys.

Although some local garment companies refused to be a party to the settlement agree-

ment, they are reportedly forced to comply with its conditions nevertheless. NET Corp., for instance, was decertified for its failure to remit monthly payments ranging from \$1,500 to \$6,000 to the board.

According to the class action settlement agreement, garment firms decertified by the board will not be eligible to conduct business with U.S. retailers who are parties to the settlement agreement.

Levi Strauss & Company was reportedly the only major U.S. apparel retailer that refused to sign on to the settlement agreement, only to be later vindicated in court through a dismissal of the lawsuit against it in January 2004.

Under the terms of the agreement, NET Corp. could still do business with Levi's but not the other major U.S. buyers.

cars unlimited

verizon
cmyk

Election panel wants one-sided election ballots

Hit by a car, man dies of heart attack

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

An accident proved fatal for a 30-year-old man who jumped off a pickup truck, landed face first on the asphalt pavement, and was struck by another vehicle in San Antonio last March 21.

This was not, however, what killed the victim, Koingko Tommy of Chalan Kanoa. Instead, Tommy died of an apparent heart attack while undergoing a second operation to repair a pelvis that got broken during his fall from the car.

Police reports said that Tommy was riding on the back of a pickup truck traveling north along Beach Road around 11:42pm last March 21. As the car reached the area near Sam's Electronics, Tommy reportedly signaled to driver, Ingka Phillip of As Lito, to pull over. However, just before Phillip could completely pull over, Tommy suddenly jumped off the car and was then struck by a Hyundai sedan

that was following closely behind.

The driver of the sedan, Agapito Reloj Jr. of Kobleville, tried to stop but was unable to avoid the man due to the close proximity.

Immediately after the accident, an occupant of the pickup got into a minor confrontation with the driver of the sedan.

After the mishap, the victim was reportedly uncooperative and had to be restrained due to his injuries. Authorities allegedly found him to be under the influence of alcohol with a lethal amount of 400mg/dl. He sustained injuries to his face and a pelvic fracture, and was transported to the Commonwealth Health Center, where he was admitted into the Intensive Care Unit.

On March 25, Tommy was taken to the operation room to undergo his second surgery for his injuries. While undergoing surgery, he suffered a cardiac arrest and was later pronounced dead at 10pm.

Firm seeks \$350K in damages vs trader

A company yesterday sued a Chinese businessman for allegedly failing to fulfill his obligations arising from a lease agreement over a Saipan real property.

Chong International Corp. claimed that it has been damaged in the amount of \$350,000 due to the failure of Tian Guo Xuan to make payments pursuant to the lease agreement.

The company's lawyer, Pedro M. Atalig, said Chong International and Tian entered into the agreement last Oct. 20. The term of the lease, however, was to begin last Jan. 1.

The agreement allowed Tian to make repairs and conduct renovations on the premises before the lease took effect, added Atalig.

Tian tore down the walls and removed certain improvements on the property to accommodate his business operations, Atalig said, adding that Chong International even got rid of tenants to accommodate the businessman's lease of the premises.

Atalig said that on Jan. 8, his client notified the defendant that it had defaulted on its obligations under the lease agreement. He said the trader failed to respond to the notice.

The company notified the businessman about the lease termination on Jan. 21, but Atalig said Tian again failed to reply.

Besides asking for \$350,000 in damages, Chong International also wants the court to terminate the lease. *(John Ravelo)*

Woman sues McDonald's for slip incident

A woman yesterday sued the company operating McDonald's on Saipan for an alleged slip incident that injured her.

Elvira M. Borje filed at the Superior Court a civil action that seeks monetary damages against J.C.A. Inc., which operates the local McDonald's branches.

Borje accused the company through lawyer A. Alexander Gorman of negligently allowing a dangerous condition to exist on its premises on July 17, 2003. The lawyer stressed that the company had an obligation to maintain the premises safe for its guests.

On that day, rainwater had col-

lected on the floor near the exit of McDonald's in Chalan Lau Lau, but there were no safety mats. This condition caused Borje to slip and injure herself, Gorman said.

The lawsuit also named National Union and Fire Insurance of Pittsburgh in Philadelphia as defendant, which had allegedly issued J.C.A. a liability insurance policy.

Gorman said his client has a right to maintain a direct action against the insurance firm and collect against the latter any monetary judgment—subject to the insurance policy's limit—that may be awarded by the court to Borje. *(John Ravelo)*

House legislators are amenable to a proposal by the Election Commission to reformat the Commonwealth's election ballot in a manner that would list candidates' names by the office or position they are running for, instead of by party affiliation.

House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial said commission director Greg Sablan came up with the recommendation following what he termed as the "confusion" that transpired during the November 2003 midterm elections.

"Last election, there were so many independent candidates. They appeared on the backside of the ballot, so a lot of complaints came in as a result of the two-sided ballot. So Mr. Sablan came over and asked if the Legislature is amenable to

amend the election law to only provide for one-sided ballot so that all candidates will appear on the front side of the ballot," explained Fitial.

He said the proposed new ballot would put emphasis on the candidates instead of the parties they belong to.

"The only reason why those independent candidates appear on the backside is because they accommodate the party candidates on the front," said the Saipan congressman.

Elderly voters usually have the toughest time trying to find the candidates of their choice on the ballots, especially if their names are printed in the back portion, in the case of independent candidates.

Minority Leader Heinz S. Hofschneider recommended that all candidates' names be placed on the same page. He urged the Election Commission to discard two-sided ballots.

"We should do away with multiple-sided ballots. Mostly it's our elders that are having problems with that. And they're afraid to ask," the Republican congressman said during a session yesterday morning.

The proposed new format will group candidates according to the position they are running for.

"I guess if the Legislature gives the Election Commission the blessing, then they will discuss it with the respective political parties in the Commonwealth," said Fitial.

Sablan will reportedly be setting up a meeting with the Senate to discuss the recommendation. Afterwards, a follow-up meeting is expected between the commission and both chambers. *(Marian A. Maraya)*

CDAC thanks you

The Early Intervention Service System at the Children's Developmental Assistance Center is thanking all who took the time to visit the center during its Open House activity last Friday.

"We hope that you learned more about our services and continue to offer your support. Thank you!" the center said in a statement.

bank of guam

Opinion

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John Pangelinan PUBLISHER
Aldwin R. Fajardo EDITOR
Jayvee L. Vallejera ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Haiti's 'new chapter'

Though he bitterly disappointed Haitians who hoped he would bring democracy and development to the hemisphere's poorest country, Jean-Bertrand Aristide in the end made the right decision. Rather than make a last stand in his capital, he accepted the offer of an American plane trip to exile and opened the way for a U.S.-led international force to end the anarchy overtaking the country. History will likely judge that Mr. Aristide was mostly responsible for his own downfall: He presided over a corrupt government that regularly used violence against its opponents and eventually provoked a violent uprising. But his flight to exile Sunday was forced by the Bush administration, which refused to support international intervention or commit U.S. forces until after Mr. Aristide capitulated. President Bush's declaration Sunday that "the Haitian constitution is working" offered scant cover for the reality that his decisions over the past two weeks had led to the departure of an elected president.

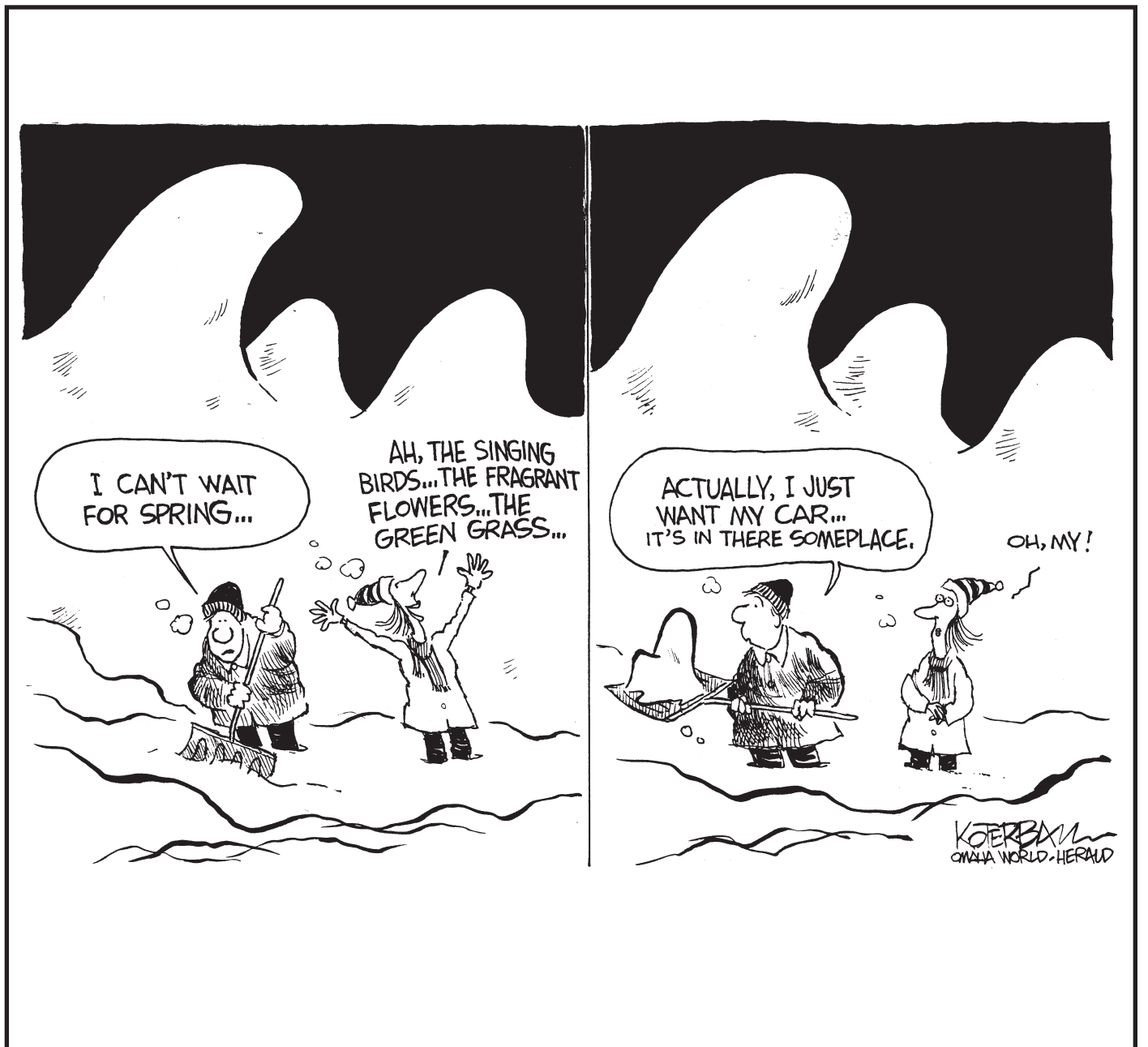
Whether the downfall of Mr. Aristide leads to "a new chapter" and "a hopeful future" for Haiti, as Mr. Bush suggested Sunday, will depend in large measure on how the United States conducts its latest intervention in the country. As a first step, U.S. forces, which were to begin arriving Sunday night, must stop the looting and lawlessness in Port-au-Prince and other cities, and they must ensure that the violent gangs roaming the country—both pro and anti-Aristide—are disarmed and disbanded. Leaders of the armed rebel groups include criminals and former paramilitary operatives from the military dictatorship that preceded Mr. Aristide; they must not be allowed to seize a share of power. Instead, the United States and allies in the Organization of American States and in the Caribbean Community should help to establish a transitional government and organize new democratic elections as soon as possible.

There is much to be learned from the last U.S. effort at stabilizing Haiti a decade ago. U.S. forces left too quickly, and they provided too little training and aid to the police they left behind. Not enough was done to help Haitians build democratic institutions. When Mr. Aristide's party manipulated the results of a congressional election, the United States suspended all further aid to his government, blocked some other development assistance, and delegated the job of finding a political solution to OAS and Caribbean diplomats with little or no leverage.

Without a more concerted effort at nation-building—comparable to that which the United States has supported in the Balkans, or Iraq—the pattern of crisis and foreign intervention in Haiti will not be broken. So far, the administration's approach offers scant grounds for optimism. As the crisis mounted over the past several months, U.S. officials ignored it until violence had spread across the country. Even when it became clear that foreign intervention would be necessary, the administration tried to hand the problem off to France or Canada. Only over the weekend did Mr. Bush finally accept what should have been obvious from the beginning: that the United States must lead any rescue of Haiti.

Now that the Marines are once again to be in Port-au-Prince, we can only hope that Mr. Bush will make a large enough commitment of U.S. resources to ensure that Haiti's next president is democratically chosen—and that he has a fair chance at success.

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Job opening, some English required

Last week, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said he supported a constitutional amendment to allow foreign-born Americans to run for president. At first I was puzzled by his interest in this issue, but then I discovered a little-known fact about the man: He was born in Austria. You'd never know it from hearing him talk, but then he is a highly skilled actor.

And he makes a good point: The U.S. Constitution is full of silly, outdated stuff about separating church and state and not putting you in jail without a trial. It's full of lots of 18th-century slang like "freedom" and "privacy."

And one of the silliest things of all is the part where it says foreigners can't be president. Arnold's right. The problem with presidents today is that they come off as a little too... American. We've got that whole cowboy "bring it on" thing goin'. What we need is a presidency injected with a little sensitivity and worldly sophistication. And who better to deliver that than the grab-and-grope action hero from "Jingle All the Way"? Schwarzenegger mentioned the German-born Henry Kissinger as someone who would have made a great president had the Constitution not been in the way—as if that ever stopped Kissinger.

Quite frankly, I think of foreigners as more educated and more socially progressive when it comes to issues such as abortion, euthanasia, birth control, the environment, religion, marriage, materialism, nuclear disarmament, poverty, human rights and life on Earth as we know it. They generally speak at least two languages and have, by definition, traveled outside the United States.

They're also less likely to wear spurs and a 4-foot-tall lime-green Styrofoam cowboy hat to an international conference and call everybody they meet there "Shooter!" Foreigners can't run for president? I believe only foreigners should run for president.

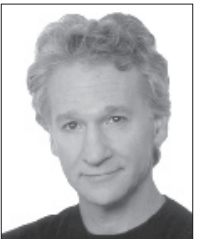
American presidents are like American beer—bland, watered down and advertised to us as if we're morons. They come from boring places like Hope, Ark., Yorba Linda, Calif., and that town in Texas where President Bush was born: New Haven, Conn.

Face it, the presidency is a lousy job. And who does lousy jobs we don't want anymore better than foreigners?

The guy we've got doing it now works only part time. He spends half the day raising money from mining companies and the other

By **BILL MAHER**
Los Angeles Times

Maher is host of HBO's "Real Time with Bill Maher."



half telling schoolchildren that al-Qaida wants them dead, and he's in bed by 7!

The average Frenchman knows more geography than we do. The average Japanese knows more math. And the average Guatemalan is already here, cleaning your house and taking care of your kids. If we can trust them with our children, why not the White House? They can run it and clean it.

As a history buff, I've noticed that of all the worst presidents in U.S. history, every single one of them was an American. Doesn't anyone see a pattern here? Nixon, Carter, Hoover—down the line—Thomas E. Dewey, all native-born Americans. Which only goes to show that sometimes ethnic profiling ... well, sometimes it's just a matter of common sense.

Just once I'd like my president, the nation's president, to be like one of those presidents Italy always has, with the expensive suits and the permanent tan and the Versace mistress, and there's photos of them canoodling on a boat but nobody cares because hey, that's "amore." Our guy gets impeached. In Italy, the stock market goes up.

It comes down to this: British people just sound better than we do. When they ask Tony Blair about weapons of mass destruction, the stuff he pulls out of his hat always sounds so much better than the stuff Bush pulls out of his hat. We're Americans, don't we deserve the best?

It's too late to undo the injustice that kept foreign-born presidential timber like Madeleine Albright and William Shatner out of the White House. But think of the future!

The job of president is just too important to be left to an American.

A prisoner in my own home

By **FRANCES ANN D. AMOG**

Do you know what it feels like to be a prisoner in your own home? Ironically, that which you call “home” does not recognize you as its own. You are not a citizen. You are not even considered a resident. You cannot leave for fear of not being allowed to enter upon your return. You have no right to vote in general elections. And, as a student, you are considered “ineligible” to apply for the different scholarships and grants needed for graduating seniors who wish to continue their studies in the U.S. And you cannot partake in all the privileges that are granted to those who hold what you do not—a U.S. passport. In the end, that is the only thing that separates you from everybody else. And that is what keeps you a “prisoner” in your own home.

My name is Frances Ann Donato Amog, born on October 31, 1982 on the beautiful island of Saipan, and one of many children recognized as “stateless.” I have lived my whole life on the island, embracing the culture and its people as my own. Saipan is home to me. It is all I have ever known. And it is where I one day hope to raise a family of my own. For so long, I was unaware that the island I call home does not recognize me as its own. During my senior year, the Board of Elections came to school to register all the seniors in the hopes of encouraging youths to exercise our right to vote in the upcoming general elections. Instead of filling out a form so that I could partake in the elections,

I sat back and watched my friends fill out theirs because I was deemed ineligible to vote. I could not participate in an event that would determine the direction the island was headed in the near future. I could not participate in voting for those who I know in my heart would do a great job. I knew those who ran for offices. I grew up watching them around the island. I went to school with their children. Yet I was still ineligible. It is a lonely feeling filled with despair when I finally realized how different I was.

In addition to that, I could not travel abroad. While my friends headed off to the states for family vacations, I spent every summer I knew on the island, enjoying all that the island offered. I attended the annual carnival and saw movies with friends. I watched the parade every Fourth of July with my family. I could not even travel to Guam for fear of not being allowed to enter because of my status, and the even bigger fear of not being able to return home. I felt as though I were being punished for something I had no control over, for something borne out of circumstance. I was not allowed to leave, or to ever step foot off the island, because there was always the risk of not being able to return home even though I was born there.

And lastly, as a “stateless” child, I lost any chance to further my studies in the U.S. despite having graduated at the top of my class. I worked so hard throughout high school, maintaining an A-average, hoping that I would have the chance to study in the states. During my senior year, I began looking at several colleges and universities in the States, namely Gonzaga University and Seattle University in

Washington. However, when attempting to apply for scholarships and grants, I noticed that every single one required U.S. citizenship, which I did not have. The only thing I was eligible for was a foreign student financial aid. I was heartbroken. I had such high hopes to attend college in the U.S. but I couldn’t. On graduation night, I walked away with several awards and no scholarship or grant. I should have been one of the first off to college, but instead, I watched my friends and classmates embark on their own journey, each filled with excitement. I was engulfed in a sea of loneliness because I noticed the uncertainty of my future due to the circumstances that surrounded my status.

I try so hard not to let my “status” and all the missed opportunities I’ve encountered get the best of me. I try not to focus on the fact that my home, in retrospect, has refused me as its own. I look away from graduation night and all that I could have been and look at all the possibilities instead. All I wanted was to take all the knowledge I wish to learn in a good university, and bring it back home. Bring it back to a place I hold dear to me, back home to the island of Saipan. However, I can’t leave. Yet, I can’t partake in events such as general elections that may very well affect me. This is what it feels like to be a prisoner in your own home. This is what it feels like to be “stateless.”

Frances graduated valedictorian from the Mount Carmel School in 2000. She lives in San Antonio with her parents, Isabelita and Pablito Amog.

So much irony in this Passion

By **PAUL RICHARD**

Special to The Washington Post

If Protestant Americans, diverse as they are, can be said to share a symbol, it has to be the clean-cut cross of Jesus they so liberally display. Hallmark puts it on cards, churches set it atop spires, celebrities hang it in their bling-bling. It’s out there in our image-world, standing crisp and white. Like other symbols, it is a weapon, and it has a history.

There are mysteries in its meanings, but not in its look. Its look is obvious: The whiteness stands for purity; the brightness for the Light. And that exact rectilinearity, 90 degrees, right on, points toward God, because it’s perfect. This cross is not the crucifix of the Roman Catholic church. No Jesus hangs on it. He’s already resurrected. No nail holes, no adze-marks, no gall-and-vinegar stains soil this immaculate abstraction. It’s no more of flesh than a diagram in a book of geometry. It’s been cleansed. It’s been washed of blood.

What hasn’t been washed of blood, what bathes in it, is “The Passion of the Christ,” which may be the bloodiest movie ever. Blood gets so much screen time in Mel Gibson’s film—for its oozings and its spurtings and its smearing of the wall—that it becomes the picture’s star. “The Passion” is a torture flick, intentionally Baroque. Its look comes less from Scripture than it does from Counter-Reformation painting.

These two visions have competed through the centuries. The Protestant Reformation stripped the cross clean. Counter-Reformation art answered by pulling out all the visual stops to defend the Catholic Church while confounding the Protestants’ aesthetics. The paintings Gibson imitates shared a propagandistic purpose. They were weapons in the wars between Protestants and Catholics that swept through Northern Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. And these weren’t merely culture wars. They were sword-and-cannon battles in which countless people died.

And yet American evangelicals and fundamentalists—the Reformation’s children—are flocking to see “The Passion of the Christ.” The Rev. Billy Graham has called Gibson’s film “a lifetime of sermons in one movie,” though the difference, a big one, is that sermons come in words while movies do their work through the viewer’s eye. Protestants around the country are buying blocks of tickets. Out in Santa Rosa, Calif., a pastor named Andy Vom Steeg has sent out 10,000 postcards asking people in the region to see the Gibson movie and discuss it at his church.

All of which seems a little curious, and not just art-historically. There’s been an aesthetic flip: Hard-core, clean-cross Protestants would once have been appalled, en masse, by the Counter-Reformation style and its message. Now many lap it up.

Gibson’s action may be set in 1st-century Jerusalem, but his style comes from 17th-century Rome.

Special-effect skies, gleams from brass and leather, swirling darks and lights, heart-rending emoting—Rome’s militantly Catholic painters, and their peers in Spain and Flanders, went straight for the gut, and did so through the viewer’s responding eye. Gibson does the same. His Mary and Magdalene, shown in tear-streaked close-ups gazing dolorously upward, look just like Guido Reni’s. And when Gibson calls his film “a moving Caravaggio” it is because its swirlings, its gritty realism, its dark palette, and its scenes side-lit by torches come straight from Caravaggio’s paintings. In the 1950s, Hollywood’s Jesuses sported spotless white cashmere robes and shampooed hair, but Caravaggio dressed his figures in rags of sober hue. So does Gibson. Gibson needs these references because his movie is so gory. There is only so much you can do to hurt human flesh, but when the film has done enough, it does a whole lot more. The artiness is there to soften our disgust. Over his movie’s bloodiness Gibson has poured the sort of golden glow that rises through the yellowed varnish of Old Master paintings. And beneath his gore he shows us the many ripe conventions of Counter-Reformation art.

Martin Luther’s Reformation was a theological rebellion. At its core was a refusal. No longer would the rebels accept the pope in Rome, or the hierarchy he led, or the Latin of the Mass and of the Vulgate Bible, which most of them could neither read nor understand. If they themselves could read the Bible (which Luther soon began to translate into German), they could find their way to God with the aid of faith alone. They didn’t need the pope, they didn’t need his saints, they didn’t need his priests, and—as some began insisting—they didn’t need his art.

The more the reformers valorized the Word, the more they turned away from images. The most extreme among them—the “image-breakers,” the iconoclasts—saw it as their duty to smash the sensual power—the scary, popish power—they sensed in Catholic art.

For the Pilgrims of East Anglia, the Huguenots of France, and the Calvinists of the Netherlands, Counter-Reformation art smacked of popishness, idolatry, unrestrained excess. They knew what the Counter-Reformation was counter to—it was counter to them. Its art, they understood, was devised to dent their scruples and to undo their aesthetic. They did not take it lying down.

On Aug. 10, 1566, at Steenvoorde in Flanders, a Calvinist preacher named Sebastian Matte told his listeners to go and smash the art in Catholic churches. Ten days afterward, the cathedral at Antwerp was methodically trashed (though later, under Catholic rule, Rubens was commissioned to re-do its splendor).

Such spasms of enthusiastic image-breaking erupted in the British Isles for most of the next century. “Lord, what work was here!” lamented the Bishop of Norwich in 1647. “What clattering of glasses! What beating down of walls!”

Think of all art destroyed, the statues with their heads knocked off, the broken stained-glass windows. Think of all the churches, especially in the Netherlands, with their murals whitewashed out.

Hatred was involved, of course, in destructions such as these. Class issues, and politics, and imperial disputes were also much in play, but so, too, was a scruple as old as monotheism—a fear of basely materializing the ungraspable Divine.

Most of the Protestant image-breakers, busily whitewashing and smashing, were confident that they had Scripture on their side. In Exodus 20, after all, God is pretty specific: “Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” And Jesus was cited, too: “Blessed are they,” he tells us in John 20:29, “that have not seen and yet have believed.”

If American Protestantism can be said to have a visual style, this preference for the cleansed, the stripped-down, the ascetic, must be one of its chief strands. That plainness is still seen in the clean, white clapboard churches scattered through New England, in the Quaker meeting houses of Pennsylvania, all the way to the Crystal Cathedral in Orange County, Calif. No Catholic paintings taint these sanctuaries. Billy Sunday’s revival tent wasn’t hung with gilded frames. The Little Brown Church in the Vale, famous through song, is a structure without paintings. In Protestant America they’ve been absent from the start.

And now along comes Gibson, returning to center stage the vivid Catholic imagery—sensual, argumentative, Marian and Latinate—of Counter-Reformation art.

He is, no doubt, sincere. But then the Aztec priests who ripped out human hearts were pretty sincere, too. So are the flagellants who still bloody themselves for God in so many Shiite and Spanish-speaking countries. The act of seeking the divine through blood and gruesome suffering didn’t start with Gibson. It must be immensely old.

Many contemporary Protestants will approve of Gibson’s movie, and I bet they won’t be thinking of 17th-century Italian art, or popish propaganda, Calvinist image-breaking, or anything like that. That reviled mainstream Hollywood is taking Scripture seriously will fill their hearts with hope. That Gibson is a Roman Catholic, and a pre-Vatican II traditionalist, will not be held against him. He’s a conservative and a star.

The author has written about art for The Post since 1967.

Initiative wants to ban same-sex marriage

By MARIAN A. MARAYA
REPORTER

A ban on same-sex marriage is being proposed in a legislative initiative introduced yesterday by House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial, who expressed firm belief that the union should take place only between a man and a woman.

House Legislative Initiative 14-3 will be put on the floor for action on Thursday, when the House resumes session at 10am.

"I respect the marriages that have taken place in the United States between same sexes. But I don't think that we should make

that a policy here to allow same sex marriage in the CNMI," the presiding officer said in an interview with reporters yesterday.

The initiative has to muster a three-fourths vote from each house to see passage. Afterwards, it goes to the ballot for the voters to decide.

Put before a predominantly Catholic population, the House leadership expects no opposition on HLI 14-3.

"I doubt [that there would be opposition]. That'll be interesting if there's actually someone opposing it," recognized Fitial.

"Most of us are Catholics and

we grew up seeing our parents teaching us the true, good values of the Catholic Church. And this is one of the very important values that the Catholic church taught, that marriage should be between a man and a woman," said the Saipan congressman.

House members have agreed to put the initiative to a vote in Thursday's session to allow students from Mt. Carmel School, who are expected to visit the Legislature, to witness the debate, if any, on the proposal.

HLI 14-3 essentially seeks to amend Section 5 of Article II of the Constitution by add-

ing a new subsection (e) to limit legislative authority in enacting laws relating to marriage.

The proposed section reads: "It is the public policy of the Commonwealth to protect the unique relationship of marriage and that only the union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in the CNMI and the legislature may enact no law inconsistent with the

public policy on marriage."

In some U.S. mainland states, gay and lesbian couples have been pledging their commitment to each other through marriage even as its validity continue to be debated and challenged.

San Francisco in California started sanctioning marriage unions between same-sex partners last Feb. 12. Since then until March 9, 2004, more than

3,700 same-sex couples have reportedly gotten married in the Bay Area. The marriage ceremonies have been intended to force the State of California to act on legalizing gay marriage.

In Massachusetts, lawmakers are poised to resume debate on whether to give final approval to an amendment that would ban gay marriage but allow gay couples to enter into civil unions.

CUC

From Page 1

pressed great disappointment with the board's decision.

Others present in yesterday's meeting included a five-member team from the Office of the Public Auditor led by its chief, Michael Sablan.

As early as Dec. 2003, the OPA had recommended to the board to cancel the RFP citing that the procurement process was "flawed and tainted to a significant degree."

About a week ago, OPA reiterated its position against pursuing the same RFP pending its issuance of a final report on the issue. OPA said it has found additional information affirming its earlier findings.

OPA had cited in its preliminary report that a July 9, 2003

pre-RFP agreement between the CUC board chairman and Taekwang "destroys the concept of a valid, competitive, and unbiased RFP, as required by both CUC and the CNMI Procurement Regulations."

Recently, OPA said that CUC has not come up with its own comprehensive financial analysis on the project.

Besides OPA, the 13th House of Representatives' Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications, chaired by Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero, also recommended the termination of the project proposal.

The Attorney General's Office had also advised the utility agency against pursuing the project without a comprehensive analysis.

OPA has said that the only recent comprehensive study on

water infrastructure on Saipan was the 2003 report of the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

Such report, it noted, did not actually list desalination, particularly reverse osmosis, as among its first priorities.

COE estimated the cost of a reverse osmosis plant to be \$24 million, OPA said.

The CUC has begun negotiating with Saipan Taekwang, one of the four proposers, which aims to secure an over \$100-million worth of contract with CUC for 15 years.

Taekwang proposes to use vacuum compressor technology, a costlier system than reverse osmosis.

The three other proposers, Mitsui-USA, GET Inc., and Telesource, offered to build reverse osmosis plants.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COMBAT ENGINEER

PVT Laurence Reyes Concepcion, right, the son of Ben and Ki Concepcion and the husband of Evelyn P. Concepcion, completed Basic Training with A-Company, 146th Infantry of the U.S. Army at Fort Knox, KY on March 17, 2004. He is currently in St. Leonard, MO, for Advance Individual Training specializing in Combat Engineering under Bravo Company, 169th Engineering BN. Concepcion will later be stationed on Guam. Walter Villagomez, left, attended the Basic Training graduation ceremony of Concepcion on behalf of CNMI Resident Rep. Pete A. Tenorio.

TERMINATION

From Page 1

for apparently giving in to "intervention" by outside agencies such as the Office of the Public Auditor and the Legislature, which had both recommended the cancellation of the RFP; and even the CNMI Water Task Force, which does not list desalination as a top priority.

"The task force has nothing to do with this project. The Legislature can't intervene in this. CUC is an independent government agency," Tenorio pointed out.

He said the most that the board could have done was to disqualify Saipan Taekwang, and to sit down with Mitsui.

"You didn't even sit down with Mitsui. If the procurement process involving Taekwang was problematic, why penalize Mitsui? Why cancel the whole RFP?" he asked.

He cited that Mitsui, compared with three other proposers—Taekwang, Telesource, and GET Inc.—had the lowest

offer of \$4.75 per 1,000 gallons and has the capability to finance the entire project.

Taekwang submitted the highest offer of \$7.9 per 1,000 gallons.

In his prepared table of comparison, Tenorio showed that actual cost to CUC by Taekwang's proposal is \$16.6 per 1,000 gallons considering power cost and other amortized costs, while Mitsui's rate would only total \$6.917 for the same amount of water.

"The difference is more than double than that of Mitsui. It's very clear," Tenorio said.

He said that CUC's daily cost at 3MGD would be \$50,871 under Taekwang and \$20,751 under Mitsui. For 15 years, the Taekwang contract would cost over \$278.5 million while Mitsui would only be \$113.6 million.

Tenorio, during yesterday's meeting, warned that the RFP cancellation could result in a possible liability for CUC.

Responding to his statement, CUC board chairman Herman P. Sablan said that CUC never

had the chance to negotiate with all proposers.

"It's not only Mitsui as you're saying, but all of them. None of the four proposers were given a chance, not even Taekwang," said Sablan.

Sablan, who voted no to the motion to terminate the RFP, said that he agrees that the cancellation was unfair for the companies. "I know the unfairness to these companies."

The CUC evaluation team earlier found Taekwang Heavy Industries as "the most responsive" compared with the three other companies.

The CUC team—composed of division managers Vicente Mesa, Jess Castro, Ed Babauta, and engineers Ernie Villarin and Christy Lazano—had considered the proposals of Telesource and GET Inc. "very incomplete" and Mitsui USA "incomplete."

Telesource proposed reverse osmosis technology and submitted a \$6.9 rate per 1,000 gallons of water while California-based GET Inc. aimed to charge \$6 per 1,000 gallons.

LAWMAKER

From Page 1

on both oil firms' promise to rollback prices when conditions improved, to no avail.

He cited a period during the Iraq war when oil price in the mainland U.S. remained as is, while in the CNMI it shot up.

"We should encourage competition, Mr. Speaker...I don't see competition between Mobil and Shell. When one raises rate, the other one [follows suit]. We found that sometimes when Shell is low on fuel, they buy from Mobil. I don't know if competition exists when they do business together. So Mr. chairman, I would like to ask you to look into this and see how we can have some sort of control, at the very minimum, to promote competition in the CNMI," Guerrero said during a House session yesterday morning.

As another solution, he acknowledged that during the previous Legislature, the proposed divorcement measure to prohibit fuel suppliers from owning gas retail stations has been mulled.

The Commerce and Tourism Committee, chaired by Rep. Ray Yumul, is also studying the proposal.

Mobil and Shell's most recent decision to raise gas prices has brought the price adjustments

to a cumulative total of 17 cents per gallon for the first quarter of 2004.

Both Mobil and Shell stations on the islands have set self-service gallon prices for regular and premium gasoline at \$2.279 and 2.379, respectively.

Mobil adjusted its pump prices late last week. Shell followed and officially declared its price increases on Saturday.

"It is unfortunate during these difficult times to have to announce a further price increase. However, recent increases in the worldwide price of oil has forced the cost of refined product to increase," said Shell Marianas president Phil Stalker.

"Shell has no choice but increase the price [of] regular and premium gas at the pump by \$0.05 [5 cents] a gallon in Guam and on Saipan to cover the increase in cost," Stalker added.

He said the price adjustment did not include the price of diesel fuel, which remained at \$2.429 a gallon. Mobil had done the same thing, carrying the same retail price for diesel.

The price changes become the fourth for Mobil and the third for Shell this year. Both, however, have increased gas prices by a total of 17 cents a gallon for the year.

Shell first increased fuel prices by about 7 cents a gallon last January, citing market forces

in Singapore. Mobil immediately followed suit by raising its gallon prices by 4 cents before adjusting them again by an additional 3 cents.

On March 8, Shell raised gas prices on Saipan by 5 cents a gallon. The company attributed the price adjustment to higher freight costs.

Mobil declared similar price hikes for gasoline effective March 11. However, it attributed its decision to raise gas prices partly to higher crude costs.

"This increase is driven by several factors, including higher crude costs which have significantly impacted the cost of imported gasoline," Mobil Oil public affairs manager Cecile Bamba Suda then said.

With the new round of price increases, Shell said it would roll back pump prices once market forces pushing them up ease. It had made this earlier assurance since taking on the first price hike in January, but no rollback has reportedly taken place since then.

"Should the price of refined product decline, Shell will reconsider its position and lower the price of fuel accordingly. We look forward to better times ahead and the reduction of the price of oil so that prices at the pump can be reduced for our consumers," Stalker said. *(Marian A. Maraya with John Ravelo)*

SALARY

From Page 1

the disbursement process.

According to ports officials, the CPA is currently monitoring the cash flow of the agency and it (cash flow) has been improving since February and this month.

According to Salas, if the CPA's financial standing continues to stabilize, the ports authority would begin its annual increments

by October 2004 or at least three years after its stoppage.

In addition to this, the CPA Board also asked comptroller George Palican to submit by April 30 a financial report that would detail the financial standing of the CPA, including the available money that could be used for the salary increase of the ports personnel.

Based on the CPA projections, the ports authority would be

needing an additional \$50,000 initially once the salary increase begins.

With the increase of tourist traffic at the Saipan International Airport, the ports authority is optimistic that the Passenger Facility Charge would be implemented to help them generate additional funds for the various projects that the ports authority would be undertaking.

Scholarship slots seeking applicants

The Scholarship Office wants to notify the public of its 2004/05 application deadlines.

Interested applicants are urged to note the following important deadlines for the types of financial assistance applying for:

- June 30: Public Law 7-32 as amended by Public Law 11-77. Applications and all supporting documents must be received.

- July 1: Fall quarter/semester Teacher Scholarship and EAP applications must be received or postmarked. Supporting documents must be received within 30 calendar days from the first day of instruction.

Applicants may obtain an application by visiting the Scholarship Office at Capitol Hill Government Building #1311 or by downloading the application

from www.cnmischolarship.com.

Applications submitted for Fall 2004 is applicable for Spring/Winter 2005.

Supporting documents needed include:

- Most recent official sealed transcript;

- Acceptance letter into a recognized U.S. accredited institution;

- U.S. Passport and/or birth certificate from Court

- SAT scores (for PL 7-32/PL 11-77);

- Recommendation letter from high school (for PL 7-32/PL 11-77);

- CNMI 1040 tax forms may be required should your official transcript fail to prove residency requirement;

- 2002 & 2003 1040 tax form

(for PL 7-32/PL 11-77 & EAP)

- 2001, 2002 & 2003 1040 tax form (for Teacher Scholarship (PL 10-58/PL 11-34)

- Other required supporting documents may be requested.

Public Law 7-32 Scholarship as amended by Public Law 11-77 is awarded to graduating high school students with the highest scholastic achievement from each island. The selection is made from the top two students from the islands of Tinian and Rota, four from the island of Saipan, and two from off-island if they meet the criteria set by law.

Public Law 10-58 Scholarship as amended by Public Law 11-34, known as the "Teacher Scholarship," is awarded to juniors and seniors who want to take up a degree in the field of teaching, including Early Child-

hood Development and Special Education. They must be admitted into the school of their choice, in addition to meeting policy set criteria. This program expires in Dec. 2004.

The Educational Assistance Program is a "grant" awarded to students enrolled in an accredited institution pursuing a Certificate, Associate Degree or Baccalaureate Degree who meet set criteria as stated in the policy. In addition, financial assistance may be offered to the following programs: on-island undergraduate part-time assistance, undergraduate merit incentive and graduate & professional assistance. Funding is contingent upon availability of funds.

For a detailed information and other financial aid assistance available, log-on to www.cnmischolarship.com, or call the Scholarship Office at 670-664-4750/1/3, or at facsimile at 670-664-4759.

Other scholarship available:

- Robert C. Byrd Scholarship. Contact Bill Matson at (670) 664-3790

- The Tinian Municipal Scholarship provides Financial Assistance to students from Tinian and Aguiguan who are pursuing undergraduate or graduate degree at U.S. accredited institutions in and outside of the Commonwealth. For more information, contact Tinian Municipal Scholarship Board chair James Mendiola at 670-43303470. You may also email him at tinianscholarship@hotmail.com. To access the Tinian Municipal Scholarship visit www.tinianonline.com.

- CNMI Refaluwasch Scholarship. Chartered since 1994, the Carolinian Affairs Incorporated is a non-profit organization charged to promote programs that will benefit the Carolinian community in the CNMI. It provides supplemental funds to eligible Carolinian students wishing to pursue postsecondary studies. This includes graduate and professional studies. For detailed information, email admincao@saipan.com, or call 670-234-6385 and ask for Jocelyn Kaipat or Patricia Nogis.

- Federal Pell Grant: www.fafsa.ed.gov

Anyone interested enrolling at Notre Dame, Tulane or Lewis & Clark and needing assistance through the admission process can call Timothy McFarrell at 670-234-5684.

Bert Thompson scholarship now open

The memorial Bert Thompson Scholarship for academic year 2004-2005 is now accepting applicants, according to Yasuo Miyazawa, president of Seisa Group (formerly Miyazawa Group). All eligible students are encouraged to apply.

Eligible applicants are graduating seniors from public high schools on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota who wish to pursue postsecondary vo-

ational/technical education in the CNMI or elsewhere, and social welfare training in Japan, and who meet the requirements in the Bert Thompson Scholarship Policy.

The Bert Thompson Scholarship is an annual scholarship awarded to one student a year. The selected student will receive \$2,000 in the first year and another \$2,000 in the second year

based on performance.

Application details, scholarship policy, and application forms are available at <http://www.cnmischolarship.com>, courtesy of the CNMI Scholarship Office. You may also contact Dr. Elizabeth Rechebei at lizdrech@gtepacific.net if you have questions about the scholarship. All applications must be postmarked no later than May 3, 2004.

Cultural grant available for 2004

A program for cultural cooperation among the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Spain, universities in the Philippines, and the Pacific Islands offers funding up to 200,000 Philippine peso (or its equivalent in U.S. dollars) for projects in the Humanities and the Social Sciences that study and articulate the shared heritage and the shared future of Spain, the Philippines, and the Pacific Islands. It also awards grants for studies on Spain.

This year, applications may focus on the following areas: contemporary Spain, comparative studies on Spain and the Philippines or the Pacific is-

lands, Spanish language (didactics/borrowings), the performing arts and the cinema, preservation of cultural heritage, and urban planning, among others.

Applications may be for research grants, publication projects, cultural activities, conferences, symposia and seminars involving collaborative and interdisciplinary research, and funding for visiting professors.

This program is headed by the Ambassador of Spain to the Philippines and the Pacific Islands. The Ambassador chairs the Executive Committee that sets the program priorities and evaluates grant applications on an annual basis. The Pacific is

represented in the Executive Committee by a select group of individuals from the Federated States of Micronesia, the CNMI, Guam, and the Republic of Palau. Dr. Elizabeth Diaz Rechebei represents the CNMI in the Executive Committee.

Application forms and details about each type of grant are available at <http://pcc.ateneo.net>. You may also contact Dr. Elizabeth Diaz Rechebei at lizdrech@gtepacific.net. All applications must be sent to the General Coordinator for the Program, Fr. Jose M. Cruz, S.J.(email: spain@admu.edu.ph). The deadline for applications is June 5, 2004.

nmc



GRENADE EXPERT

PV2 Alfred Okamura Pangelinan, right, the son of Alfred A. Pangelinan and Karmina Okamura and grandson of Elias Okamura, recently graduated with honors from Basic Training with C-Company, 35th Engineering Battalion of the U.S. Army at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. Pangelinan was cited for his expertise in grenade handling and sharp shooting ability. Walter Villagomez, left, witnessed the March 19 ceremony on behalf of CNMI Resident Rep. Pete A. Tenorio and Pangelinan's family members who were unable to make the trip. Pangelinan is currently preparing to leave to Fort Benning, GA, where he will undergo Advance Individual Training in the Airborne field.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Municipal councils back NMI delegate bid

The 3rd Association of CNMI Municipal Councils Inc. recently adopted a resolution that asks the 108th U.S. Congress to grant the CNMI non-voting delegate status.

Resolution No. 3 AMC-3-RS-002 states that the preaching, teaching and practicing of democracy by the United States have inspired the people of the Commonwealth to overwhelmingly vote to become a permanent member of the American political family through the terms and conditions of the Covenant.

By virtue of this historical document, the people of the CNMI were granted with the authority to control their internal affairs.

"Over the years of self-government, we have proven that we are capable to govern our-

selves efficiently and effectively," the resolution reads.

It also points out that while the United States has granted insular areas within its jurisdiction to fully exercise their freedom of representation in the halls of the U.S. Congress, the CNMI is the only insular area within the United States that has yet to enjoy the rewarding and exciting experience of freedom of representation in Congress.

The resolution maintained that the strong aspiration and desire of the people of the CNMI for a permanent membership in the American political family has and continues to be attested by growth in the number of Northern Marianas-descent men and women currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The resolution concluded by

saying that the members of the CNMI Association of Municipal Councils Inc.—composed of elected members at the municipal level on Rota, Tinian and Aguguan, and Saipan and the Northern Islands—are joining the Executive and Legislative Branches, the Resident Representative to the United States and the CNMI Mayors in endorsing, supporting and recommending to Congress and the U.S. president to provide the people of the CNMI the opportunity to exercise democracy through a non-voting delegate in the halls of Congress.

The resolution was certified by association president Gregorio V. Deleon Guerrero and vice president Jude U. Hofschneider and attested by secretary Mametto M. Ayuyu.

Saipan, NI council lauds Roy P. Reyes

The 8th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council has recently adopted a resolution recognizing and congratulating Roy P. Reyes for successfully passing the NCEES Principles and Practice of Civil Engineering Examination and Special California Seismic Principles Examination.

Resolution No. 8SMC-IRS-35 says Reyes' achievement brings national honor and distinction to the people of the CNMI.

Reyes is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers National Chapter and the Construction Institute and Transportation and Development Institute. He is currently employed by the Department of Public Works.

Reyes received his associate degree in General Studies from Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon in June 1996, and a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon in June 1998, with honors.

He was a Survey Field Aid, Meridian Surveying, Saipan; a math and science tutor, Chemeketa Community College, Salem, Oregon, where he received a Master Tutor Certification by the College Reading and Learning Association; Math and Science Tutor, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

Reyes attended several training programs in the United States and Saipan, including Contract Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division; Materials Soils Recognition Course, Federal Highway Administration, Lakewood, Colorado; Introduction to Hydraulics, Federal Highway Administration, Shoreview, Minnesota; Urban Drainage Design, Federal Highway Administration, Nashville, Tennessee; Essential Microstation Institution, Denver, Colorado; Design and Operation of Work Zone Traffic Control, Federal Highway Administration,

Knoxville, Tennessee; Contracting Officer's Representative Course, Management Concepts, Denver, Colorado; Washington University Law School, San Diego, California; Construction Management on Federal-Aid Highway Projects, Saipan, CNMI; and Operating Practices in Contract Administration, George Washington University School of Business and Public Management, San Diego, California.

"The council and the people of the CNMI are extremely proud of Reyes' achievement in passing the NCEES Principles and Practice of Civil Engineering Examination taken on October 24, 2003, and the Special California Examination Principles Examination taken on October 25, 2003," reads part of the resolution.

It was certified by council chair Gregorio V. Deleon Guerrero, vice chair David A. Indalecio and attested by secretary Antonia M. Tudela.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, CUC crew members Allen Teliu (on derrick), Jess Aldan (CUC Head Driller), Don Smith (WTF Program Manager), Charlie Ewart (USGS Hydrologist), Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, John Mansfield (Western Well Supply), Dan Navarro (Western Well Supply), Estakeo Semens (CUC Welder), Jun Grenada (CUC Head Driller), and Diego Cabrera (CUC crew member).

CUC drills well at Sablan quarry site

Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, who chairs the Water Task Force, recently visited well drilling crews of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. as they were working on the Sablan Quarry well field. This is the first well drilled this fiscal year that is funded by a grant from the Office of Insular Affairs.

The Water Task Force, with the help of the Office of Washington Representative, was able to secure \$2 million for exploratory well drilling, purchase of a new well drilling rig, and water conservation programs.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority and the CUC recently endorsed a memorandum of agree-

ment to allow CUC to drill nine more wells at the Obyan well field.

The Department of Public Works will be assisting the Water Task Force and CUC in the site preparations of these nine wells once the Division of Fish and Wildlife finish its review of the permit application for the project.

Search on for 10 outstanding OFWs in NMI

Come June 5, 2004, 10 overseas Filipino workers in the Commonwealth will be recognized during the celebration of Philippine Migrant Workers' Day.

The search aims to highlight and recognize exemplary performance, achievements, and community involvement.

The following are the award categories:

- Executive or managerial
- Professionals (engineers, architects, accountants, auditors, teachers, nurses, doctors, medical technologists, computer programmers, media practitioner, seamen, etc.)
- Highly-skilled/talent workers (chef/chief cooks, musicians, singers, dental assistants, paralegals, heavy equipment operators, etc.)
- Skilled workers (cook, waiters, bakers, masseuse, beauticians, barbers, bartenders, masons, carpenters, welders, electricians, casino dealers, mechanics, garment workers, plumbers,

tailors, drivers, etc.)

□ Technical workers (technicians, draftsmen, bookkeepers, construction foremen, computer technicians, etc.)

□ General office workers (administrative assistants, secretary, stenographers, cashiers, tellers, office receptionists, front desk clerks, etc.)

□ Semi-skilled and houseworkers (houseworkers, farmers, fishermen, security guards, painters, watchmen, stevedores, trash collectors, commercial cleaners, etc.)

If you know of an OFW who possesses the qualities enumerated below, he/she can be eligible for nomination:

1. Made a notable achievement/outstanding performance in his/her particular profession or field and was recognized for his/her feat by employer, co-employees, colleagues or organization/s (Job Performance-40 percent).
2. Social consciousness in terms of manifesting strong community spirit, or spear-

heading or actively participating in projects or activities for the common good (Civic involvement – 30 percent).

3. Is a good role model to his/her fellow OFWs in terms of leadership, professionalism, behavior, and family responsibility (Personality – 15 percent).

4. Continuously strives to improve self through seminars, trainings and other initiatives (Potential – 15 percent)

Nomination forms are available at the Philippine Overseas Labor Office at the ground floor of the Nauru Building in Susupe, Saipan.

Deadline for submission of nomination forms to POLO will be on May 25.

A panel of judges composed of reputable CNMI personalities will select the winners, to be announced on May 31, 2004.

For inquiries, call POLO at the following contact numbers: 235-3411, 235-6992, 235-7658.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Council secretary Antonia M. Tudela, vice chairman David A. Indalecio, Roy Reyes, Bernadita T. Palacios and chairman Gregorio V. Deleon Guerrero.

Business

Legislation pushed to address foreign retirees' investments

By **RAFFY H. ARROYO**
BUSINESS EDITOR

The Commerce Department's Economic Development Division has submitted draft legislation to the House of Representatives seeking to further facilitate the flow of more capital into the CNMI economy.

According to division director Gabriel Babauta, the proposed bill, which he had drafted with the help of the department's legal counsel, was submitted recently to Rep. Janet Maratita for sponsorship before the House.

The measure seeks to delete the bonding requirement for foreign investors and at the same time allow for foreign retirees to invest in a retirement home and reside in the islands.

Currently, investors applying for a foreign investment permit to do business in the islands are required to either post a \$25,000 security bond or a \$100,000 security deposit in a bank or trust institution.

Babauta noted that such a requirement previously applied to long-term business applicants, have been scrapped for businesses seeking a two-year permit.

The new legislation would delete any references to the bond and cash security deposit rule and would level the playing field among all both long-term permit and foreign investment

certificate applicants.

According to Babauta, there is a need to liberalize the investment process in light of the dwindling number of investors wanting to come in.

"Commerce had asked that the deposit rule be repealed for all permit applicants. That did not happen so I took it upon myself to draft this legislation with our counsel to get it eliminated once and for all," said Babauta.

The draft legislation would also address gray areas noted in Public Law 11-60, which added a new non-immigrant category under immigration laws for foreign retirees, notably from Japan, who want to come in and invest in a residence in the commonwealth.

The law, which was enacted in 1999, allows retirees over 55 years of age who have invested at least \$150,000 on a residence, to stay in the islands subject to the terms of a foreign retiree investment certificate that is renewable every five years.

Babauta noted that while oversight under Public Law 11-60 was assigned to Immigration, the Department of Commerce is the more appropriate agency to deal with this as it has full jurisdiction over issues pertaining to investments.

According to Babauta, one question commonly asked by prospective retiree investors is whether the CNMI government

would tax their pension income from their home countries.

Under CNMI law, income derived from within and without the CNMI is subject to local earnings tax and so there is a question whether the pensions paid to a retiree from Japan would be covered.

"They have asked how their pension income would be treated here. They believe that taxing their pensions here is tantamount to 'double taxation,' as Japan already taxes this income," said Babauta.

Also, there was a question on the issue of inheritance, as retiree applicants were asking what would happen to their investments here should they die.

The draft legislation seeks to resolve these issues by explicitly providing that such retirees "shall not be considered as 'resident' for income tax, local earnings tax and estate taxes."

It would be recalled that the previous administration, in enacting P.L. 11-60, wanted to establish a "silver city" retirement haven in the CNMI where Japanese retirees could reside and spend their twilight years.

It is expected that by allowing foreign retirees on, the islands would benefit in terms of new investment coming in, as well as a steady stream of more visitors, notably friends and families of the retirees.



PHOTO BY RAFFY H. ARROYO

VIP HUDDLE

Palau Micronesia Air President Alan R. Seid (second from right) joins Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente and his wife, Vicky, and long-time Saipan resident from Palau, Elias Okamura, for a photo. Seid, a former member of Palau Congress, gave a presentation on the proposed regional airline's plans Saturday at the Dai-Ichi Hotel.

SGMA eyes partnership in protecting environment

Saipan's garment factories may soon undergo environmental audits in an effort to establish measures that would ensure any adverse impacts their operations could have to the environment would be minimized.

The audits are meant to determine appropriate measures to address issues like source reduction, pollution prevention, recycling and compliance monitoring, said the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association said.

"Our goal is to reduce pollution and hazardous materials contamination of the island's environment, and train our businesses on best and alternative methods and materials for their work and living arrangements," said SGMA executive director Richard A. Pierce.

"We will then incorporate the experts' recommendations into our SGMA Code of Conduct's compliance efforts."

SGMA said that as a result of its 2004 Industry Environmental Initiatives, the CNMI Department of Environmental Quality submitted a Resource Conservation and Source Reduction

Funds Grant pre-proposal to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region IX office.

As part of the potential grant award, a team of three to five environmental experts would begin environmental audits of all participating SGMA member factories, making recommendations and suggestions to the factories, EPA and DEQ on best practices for source reduction, pollution prevention, recycling efforts and compliance monitoring.

Dave Hodges, assistant to DEQ Director John Castro, submitted the pre-proposal for consideration in advance. It would lead to an official request for proposals to support source reduction assistance for FY 2004 to fund the project, which would run for approximately one year.

"The DEQ, SGMA, and the garment manufacturers are very excited about the opportunity to potentially evaluate and utilize source reduction and pollution prevention opportunities in the garment industry here in Saipan," the pre-proposal read.

In order to qualify for the

grant award, eligible applicants are encouraged to establish partnerships with businesses and other environmental assistance providers to seamlessly deliver source reduction and pollution prevention assistance.

SGMA has been seeking to partner with DEQ and EPA, similar to the successful Excellence 2000 Partnership it currently maintains with the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety & Health Administration.

The move was disclosed in meetings held with DEQ/EPA, Coastal Resources Management Office, Department of Public Works, Department of Lands & Natural Resources, Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and Department of Commerce last month after SGMA announced its 2004 Industry Environmental Initiatives.

If the grant is awarded, and the environmental audits are to be performed, the contractors would present two on-island workshops for SGMA members and sub-contractors regarding environmental issues specific to the Saipan operations.

ACCENT
CMYK

STOCK

ASIAN MARKETS



SOUTH KOREA

1,400.00

▲10.00



JAPAN

14,378

▲100



HONG KONG

12,825

▲100



TAIWAN

7,120

▲100



THAILAND

1,400.00

▲10.00



SINGAPORE

1,400.00

▲10.00



MALAYSIA

1,400.00

▲10.00



INDONESIA

1,400.00

▲10.00



PHILIPPINES

1,400.00

▲10.00



VIETNAM

1,400.00

▲10.00

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW

10,100.6

▼109.18

NASDAQ

1,940.47

▼21.97

S&P

1,109.78

▼12.54

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.2129
British Pound	0.6448
Canadian Dollar	1.2148
Chinese Yuan	0.1599
Euro	0.6448
Japanese Yen	0.0091
Indian Rupee	0.0110
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000000
Japanese Yen	1.000000
Malaysian Ringgit	0.3148
New Zealand Dollar	0.6448
Philippine Peso	0.000000
Singapore Dollar	1.2148
South Korean Won	0.000000
Thai Baht	0.000000
Taiwan Dollar	0.000000
Yen	0.000000

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World

Life & Style

Singer Clay Walker reaches out to others

By BOBBY ROSS JR.
AP WRITER

The title cut from Clay Walker's latest album, "A Few Questions," asks: "How in this world can we put a man on the moon and still have a need for a place like St. Jude's?"

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., treats kids with cancer. Walker didn't write the song, but the first time he heard it, he said, "I got it immediately. There was no mistaking that the song would belong to my life."

That's because the 34-year-old country crooner with the black cowboy hat, who has sold 8 million albums and notched 11 No. 1 singles, was diagnosed in 1996 with multiple sclerosis.

No one would ever guess it, though, by looking at the strapping Texan, who takes a daily injection of Copaxone to keep his MS in check.

"When I was first diagnosed,

it was the most broken that I've ever been. You know, I don't think faith is faith until you have to test it," said Walker, a Christian who will kick off a nationwide, 15-city "MS Road Tour" April 1 in Dallas.

"It was like, my faith lit on fire at that point," said the Houston resident, who is married with two daughters, ages 4 and 8. "I went home and I got on my knees and I prayed. I don't know how long I prayed and cried. I got my guitar and I played hymns I learned as a child."

The tour—an effort to call attention to the disease and raise money for research to find a cure—marks a remarkable transformation for a singer who first experienced facial spasms and numbness in his right leg and arm eight years ago.

For a long time, Walker preferred not to talk about the disease. He didn't try to hide it, he said. But he didn't bring it up either.

After meeting people with MS

at many of his concerts, though, Walker's outlook changed.

They wanted to know about his experience so they could relate it to their own lives, he said. At the same time, he was surprised to learn that many people with MS don't treat the condition, either out of fear or ignorance.

"It's a serious disease and the worst thing you can do about it is nothing," said Walker, whose No. 1 hits include "If I Could Make a Living," "This Woman and This Man" and "Then What."

Last year, Walker decided to do something.

He started the nonprofit Band Against MS Foundation to raise money for research. The foundation recently awarded its first grant, for \$150,000, to the University of Texas at Houston.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society recognized Walker in November with its "Ambassador of the Year" award—only the fourth time in the organization's 58-year history that it

has bestowed that honor.

"There are many celebrities that will lend their names to organizations such as ours, and that's very important and very helpful," said Arney Rosenblat, the MS society's spokeswoman. "But sometimes they go beyond that point and they give of themselves as well. That is even more deeply appreciated."

About 400,000 Americans have MS, which starts with such symptoms as numbness, tingling and fatigue but progresses to difficulty walking and seeing and, in some cases, paralysis. It usually strikes people ages 20 to 40.

Some patients, including Walker, have "relapsing-remitting MS," periods of severe symptoms after which patients almost totally recover until the next attack. Other MS patients have the worse "secondary progressive" form, where the flares become more frequent, and they don't recover from the damage each one causes.

MS occurs when patients' immune systems go awry and attack the fatty layer of insulation, called myelin, that protects nerve fibers in the brain and spine, thus damaging or even destroying nerves.

In Walker's case, the disease brought him face to face with



Country singer Clay Walker is shown in Nashville, Tenn., in this August 1999 file photo.

his own mortality.

"I think a lot of little things that bothered me before roll off of me like water off a duck's back," he said.

Now, he hopes he can provide "a small ray of hope" to people, like him, who suffer from MS.

"It's much more than an eye-opening experience," he said. "I just look out of a different window now. The window is much bigger now, and it's also raised up so I can smell the flowers."

Artist who used Ground Zero dust awarded

CARDIFF, Wales (AP)—A New York-based artist became the first winner of a new British art prize on Sunday for a work made from dust collected from the streets of Manhattan after the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

Xu Bing was awarded the inaugural \$72,000 Artes Mundi, the Wales International Visual Art Prize, at a ceremony at the National Museum and Gallery in Cardiff.

Xu, a New York resident who was born in China, used white dust from near Ground Zero to

trace an ancient Chinese verse on the floor of the National Museum and Gallery in Cardiff. It reads: "As there is nothing from the first, where does the dust collect itself?"

The artist said he thought his work was something people could relate to. Although the fragile work of gathered dust was "peaceful and beautiful" he said, it would be very easy to destroy.

"If it's bad art you have to ex-

plain too much," he added.

The Artes Mundi, launched in September, was judged by an international panel. A shortlist of 10 artists was drawn from more than 350 nominations made by more than 60 countries.

Organizers, who said they began the competition to provoke international debate, communication and exchange between cultures, plan to hand out a prize every two years.



Xu

Kidnapped girl's parents cut media deal

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—The parents of a 6-year-old girl who was raised by her alleged kidnapper after she was believed to have died in a fire have sold the rights to their life stories for a movie and book.

The buyer is the Larry A. Thompson Organization of Beverly Hills, Calif., maker of TV movies including "And the Beat Goes On: The Sonny and Cher Story" and "Lucy & Desi: Before the Laughter."

Terms of the deal call for a

six-figure payment up front and an additional six figures once production on the movie begins, Thompson said. He declined to elaborate.

Authorities believe Delimar Vera was kidnapped from her crib in Philadelphia in 1997 when she was 10 days old and her house set ablaze to cover the crime.

Carolyn Correa was found raising the girl and is charged with kidnapping and arson. She has been held on \$1 million bail since her arrest March 2. Deli-

mar was reunited with her family earlier this month.

Thompson said that he negotiated separately with the little girl's mother, Luzaida Cuevas, and father, Pedro Vera, since they are no longer a couple.

Alex Murphy, an entertainment lawyer retained by Cuevas, said Cuevas would receive most of the money, which he categorized as "considerably in excess of \$150,000." He said close to 25 legitimate offers were made from producers all over the world.

message

'Scooby-Doo 2' scares up box-office win

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP MOVIE WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Mystery Inc. ghostbusters might have to cut their budget for Scooby snacks. "Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed" took in \$30.7 million in its opening weekend, good enough for an easy No. 1 finish but 43 percent below the \$54.2 million debut the first "Scooby-Doo" managed in June 2002.

The Coen brothers' "The Ladykillers," starring Tom Hanks in a remake of the 1955 heist black comedy, premiered in second place with \$13 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Kevin Smith's "Jersey Girl," with Ben Affleck as a widower raising a daughter and a cameo by Jennifer Lopez as his wife, debuted at No. 5 with \$8.3 million.

"Never Die Alone," starring rapper DMX as a dead drug dealer whose life unfolds through audio tapes he left behind, opened weakly at No. 11 with \$3.1 million.

Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" held solidly at No. 3 with \$12.5 million, pushing its

total to \$315 million. Now playing in 3,214 theaters, "The Passion" will widen by 400 to 500 cinemas this Friday, with Gibson and distributor Newmarket counting on a surge in business through Easter.

The previous weekend's top movie, "Dawn of the Dead," tumbled to fourth place with \$10.3 million, lifting its 10-day total to \$43.9 million.

The overall box office was up for the fifth straight weekend, with the top 12 movies grossing \$109.4 million, a 26 percent increase from the same weekend last year.

"Scooby-Doo 2" reunites the computer-animated Great Dane with stars Freddie Prinze Jr., Sarah Michelle Gellar, Linda Cardellini and Matthew Lillard. Like its predecessor, "Scooby-Doo 2" received harsh reviews but managed to lure in the family crowd.

Rather than waiting for summer blockbuster season, Warner Bros. put the film out in March, a slower time at theaters, to avoid competing with its own family adventure "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" in June and "Shrek 2" in late May.

With less competition than "Scooby-Doo" had in summer, the studio counts on the sequel having a longer shelf life as schools let out for Easter and spring break over the next couple of weeks, said Dan Fellman, Warner head of distribution.

"The Ladykillers" and "Jersey Girl" each played in fewer than half the number of theaters as "Scooby-Doo 2," which had a healthy \$9,283 average in 3,312 cinemas. Playing in 1,583 theaters, "The Ladykillers" averaged \$8,214, while "Jersey Girl" did \$5,462 in 1,520 cinemas.

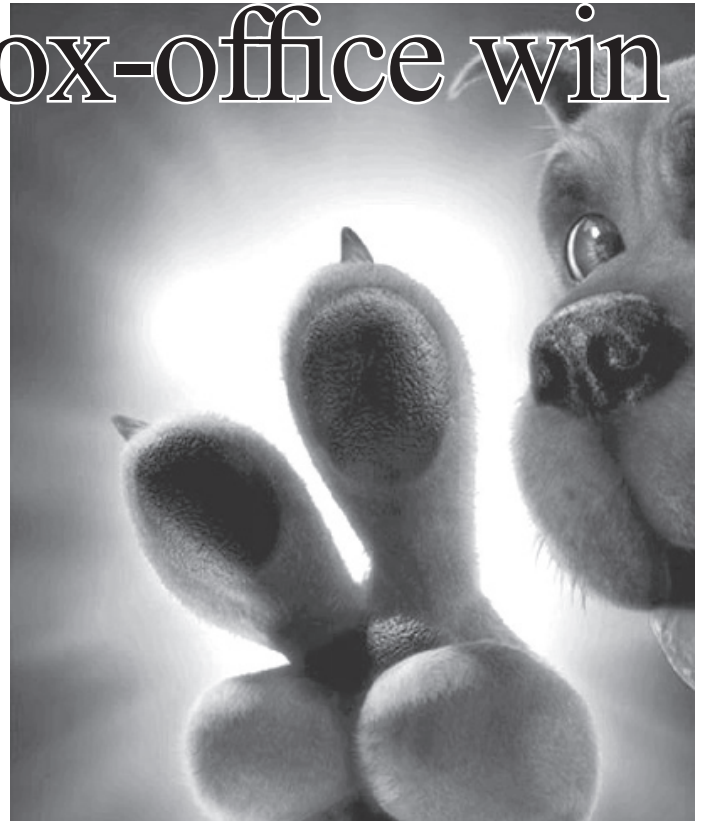
Buoyed by Hanks' star power, "The Ladykillers" had the best opening ever for a Coen brothers flick, topping the \$12.5 million debut of their "Intolerable Cruelty" last fall.

It was a solid opening for "Jersey Girl," which appears to have dodged the taint of last summer's Affleck-Lopez bomb "Gigli." In just one weekend, "Jersey Girl" surpassed the \$6 million total domestic gross of "Gigli," which hit theaters amid the tabloid frenzy over former sweethearts Affleck and Lopez's wedding plans.

In limited release, Nicole Kidman's "Dogville" opened well with \$90,000 at nine theaters in New York City and Los Angeles. Directed by Lars Von Trier, the three-hour "Dogville" stars Kidman as a fugitive who finds refuge—then subjugation—among the narrow-minded residents of a Rocky Mountain town.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. **"Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed,"** \$30.7 million.
2. **"The Ladykillers,"** \$13 million.
3. **"The Passion of the Christ,"** \$12.5 million.
4. **"Dawn of the Dead,"** \$10.3 million.
5. **"Jersey Girl,"** \$8.3 million.
6. **"Taking Lives,"** \$6.5 million.
7. **"Starsky & Hutch,"** \$6.3 million.
8. **"Hidalgo,"** \$5.43 million.
9. **"Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind,"** \$5.42 million.
10. **"Secret Window,"** \$5.4 million.



Film noir blonde Jan Sterling dies



AP

Jan Sterling shows off a small microphone used in the filming of "Hear No Evil," in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles in this Dec. 31, 1951, file photo.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Jan Sterling, the cool, often conniving blonde in Hollywood film noir movies of the 1940s and '50s, died Friday. She was 82.

Sterling broke her hip recently and had suffered a couple of strokes from which she never recovered, close friend Kay Tomborg said. She died at the Motion Picture and Television Fund's home and hospital facility in suburban Woodland Hills.

Sterling's most remembered

role came in 1951 with Billy Wilder's cynical film "Ace in the Hole," which was rereleased as "The Big Carnival" when audiences were repelled by its harsh message. Kirk Douglas starred as a ruthless reporter seeking a scoop by prolonging the rescue of a man trapped in a cave. Sterling played a sardonic observer.

"I remember Jan Sterling as being a very funny woman," actor Robert Arthur recalled Friday. "For me she was the comic

Jan & Dean singer Berry dies at 62

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Jan Berry, a member of the duo Jan & Dean that had the 1960s surf-music hits "Deadman's Curve" and "The Little Old Lady from Pasadena," has died. He was 62.

Berry had a seizure and stopped breathing Friday at his home. He was pronounced dead that evening at a hospital, said his wife, Gertie Berry.

He had been in poor health recently from the lingering effects of brain damage from a 1966 car crash.

Jan & Dean had a string of hits and 10 gold records in the 1960s with their tales of Southern California. Among them were 1964's "The Little Old Lady from Pasadena," about a hotrod racing grandma, and "Surf City," with its lines about taking the station wagon to a place where there

are "two girls for every boy."

With Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys, William Jan Berry co-wrote the lyrics for "Surf City" and "Deadman's Curve," which featured the driving guitar licks and falsetto crooning of the wildly popular surf music.

Berry's hit-making career with high school friend Dean Torrence was cut short in 1966 when Berry's speeding Corvette hit a parked truck and he suffered severe brain damage that left him partially paralyzed and unable to talk.

His recovery was slow, but eventually he was able to resume singing and writing songs.

In addition to his wife, Berry is survived by his parents, William and Clara Berry of Camarillo; three brothers and three sisters.

relief in an otherwise grim story. She uttered the famous line: 'I never go to church because it bags my nylons,'" said Arthur, who was also in the movie.

In 1954 Sterling played one of the terrified passengers on a troubled flight from Hawaii to the mainland in "The High and the Mighty." Her performance won her a Golden Globe statue and an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actress.

Jane Sterling Adriance was

born into a socially prominent New York City family on April 3, 1921. Her blonde beauty and dramatic intensity made her a movie star in such films as "Johnny Belinda," "Caged," "Flesh and Fury," "Split Second," "The Human Jungle," "Women's Prison," "Female on the Beach" and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue."

Sterling was the widow of actor Paul Douglas and longtime companion of actor Sam Wanamaker, who died in 1993.

Bright women prefer husbands with hearts bigger than brains

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: My father actually cut out the letter you printed from "Second Thoughts in Texas" and mailed it to me. It was the one from the woman asking if she should break up with "Dale," a romantic, nurturing and supportive man who isn't as bright as she would prefer him to be.



Dear Abby

I have been dealing with the same issue for the last eight years. I'm 32; my husband, "Jay," is 28. I divorced him two years ago for the same reasons "Second Thoughts" related.

While Jay and I were apart, I dated other men -- generally older. And I did find someone, "Bill," who fit the ideal I was looking for. My problem was, I could never get the "feeling" for Bill that I had for my husband, even though I tried. The breakup with Bill was terrible.

Jay and I are back together now and happier than ever.

I am still in college and I took a personality test. I gave the same test to Jay. We couldn't believe the results. It put a lot of things in perspective about the two of us. I can get intellectual stimulation at school or at work. It is much harder to find someone who is always there for me than it is to find a witty conversationalist.

She should never let him go.

WARM HEART IN CHICAGO

DEAR WARM HEART: That letter generated a stack of mail. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: This is for the woman who has "Second Thoughts in Texas." Lady, you will soon realize that the man you have is the one you wished for, despite his lack of intellect. My husband is all you mentioned. I help him with his intellectual skills because he is worth every effort.

We have been married eight years, and I take pride in the fact that my husband makes the effort to impress me with his conversation and etiquette. We discussed it when we were first married, and things have been fine ever since. But I would never have considered giving him up because there were so many great reasons to stay with him.

Tell "Second Thoughts" that not every marriage starts out 100 percent. There is always an area that needs a little help, but you can work on it together.

WORTH EVERY EFFORT IN NEW YORK

DEAR WARM HEART AND WORTH EVERY EFFORT: As I said in my reply to "Second Thoughts," for many women, Dale's positive qualities would be enough and he would be considered a prize. Your experiences prove the truth of that statement. But for someone to enter a marriage feeling that he or she is making a sacrifice because his or her partner is somehow lacking is unfair to the partner, and I would not recommend it.

DEAR ABBY: My mother-in-law, "Gertie," lived with us for the last two years since she was no longer able to care for herself. We let her have the master bedroom. I moved into the computer room and slept on a cot while my husband, "Duane," slept on a hide-a-bed in the living room.

Gertie died two months ago, and now Duane refuses to move her belongings out of that room. He says that everything in there is sacred. My husband even turns her favorite nightlight on at night. What am I to do? I can't compete with a ghost!

HELPLESS

DEAR HELPLESS: Your husband is grieving for his mother and is not behaving rationally. He needs grief counseling and possibly a support group. Consult his doctor and see that he gets it. Meanwhile, join him on the hide-a-bed.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS, and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." To order, send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Singer Howie Day arrested in Wisconsin

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Singer Howie Day was arrested for apparently locking a woman in a bathroom and breaking another woman's cell phone after one of the women allegedly refused his sexual advances.

Day, 23, who opened for the

band Barenaked Ladies at a concert Wednesday, was charged Friday with misdemeanor counts of criminal damage to property and disorderly conduct in connection with the post-concert incident on his tour bus.

Day was released from jail af-

ter posting \$850 bail Thursday. He is scheduled for a court appearance on April 1.

According to a criminal complaint, Day allegedly locked a woman in a bathroom on the tour bus after she refused his sexual advance. He then broke

the cell phone of another woman trying to call police.

"That was probably wrong of me," Day told police of breaking the phone. "But I felt violated."

The singer-songwriter has received critical acclaim with his 2003 album "Stop All the World Now."



Jackie Chan rips Taiwan's election

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Hong Kong film star Jackie Chan said Sunday that Taiwan's recent presidential election was "the biggest joke in the world."

President Chen Shui-bian narrowly won the March 20 vote. The opposition wants to nullify the results after Lien Chan lost the election and claimed the vote was marred by irregularities. Thousands protested in the streets for a week after the vote.

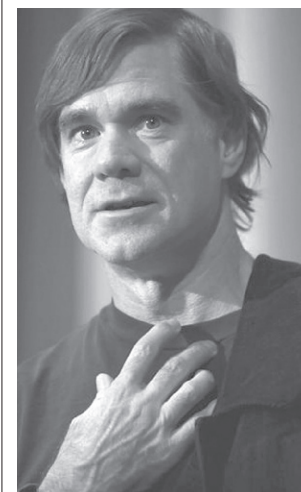
"People will talk about it for

Action star Jackie Chan dwells on a thought at a press conference announcing a new film production course he helped plan in Hong Kong in this Feb. 4, 2004 file photo.

AP

100 years," Chan said at a news conference in Shanghai. "It was a shame. Not so good to look at. I was very upset and couldn't fall asleep."

Chan's comments were aired on Taiwanese television.



AP

Director Gus Van Sant speaks at a press conference in Portland, Ore., in this Oct. 4, 2003 file photo, prior to the premier of his film "Elephant."

Van Sant moving film from Oregon to NY

SALEM, Ore. (AP)—Director Gus Van Sant is moving production of his latest film from Portland to New York. The movie, titled "Last Days," is a look at the Northwest's grunge music scene in the mid-1990s, with Michael Pitt starring as the lead singer of a Nirvana-like band.

Open casting calls for the HBO production recently drew about 5,000 hopefuls in Portland, Eugene and Washington; Van Sant's "Elephant," the story of a high school shooting, had been shot in Portland with a cast of virtual unknowns.

Production was to have started in April in Portland, but Van Sant found a house appropriate for the film in New York.

"He decided ultimately to pick New York, which is a disappointment when they do that," said Liza McQuade, project coordinator for the Oregon Film & Video Office. "It was basically a matter of location, and his artistic vision of the film changed."

Jamaicans record Bob Dylan tribute album

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP)—Jamaican musicians have recorded a tribute album to Bob Dylan with reggae covers of some of the singer's most well-known songs, the album's distributor said Friday.

"Is It Rolling, Bob" includes 16 songs recorded by veteran performers such as Beres Hammond and new-wave roots groups like Sizzla, said Gary

Himelfarb, head of Washington D.C.-based RAS Records.

"Bob Dylan has always been one of my favorite artists," Himelfarb said. "He was a voice of the oppressed in the 1960s, just like Bob Marley was the voice of the oppressed in the 1970s."

Although the album will not be released in the United States and Europe until June, three

songs are playing already in Jamaica: "Subterranean Blues" by Sizzla, "Knocking On Heaven's Door" by Luciano and "Just Like a Woman" by Hammond.

Recording took place in Kingston, London and Washington D.C.

Other musicians featured on the album include guitarist Earl Smith, a former guitarist for Marley's band, The Wailers.



AP

Passersby look at a sign from Donald Trump's television show, "The Apprentice," hung on the Trump Tower in New York, Saturday March 27, 2004.

Trump's 'You're Fired' banner draws ire

NEW YORK (AP)—A giant "You're Fired" sign on the Trump Tower in midtown Manhattan has earned Donald Trump's development firm four summonses from the city.

The firm does not have a permit and was asked on four occasions to remove the 13-foot tall, 25-foot wide banner that promotes the hit

reality television show "The Apprentice," the New York Post first reported Friday.

Trump told The Daily News that the Fifth Avenue skyscraper's sign was a tourist attraction and "New York should appreciate it instead of fighting it."

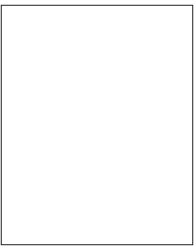
Trump Tower Commercial LLC, the building's owner, could

face \$2,500 fines for each of the violations after a hearing. City officials planned to file an order to remove the banner with the Secretary of State in Albany.

"The biggest complaint about the city is that it's an unfriendly place to do business," Trump told the Post. "They should wise up."

Pastimes

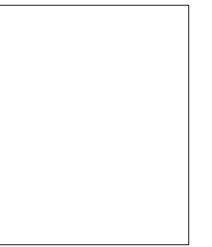




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Saipan Tribune Sports

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE